UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/50/157
29 February 1996

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 111

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/50/634)]

50/157. Programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind that one of the purposes of the United Nations, as set forth in the Charter, is the achievement of international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recalling its resolutions 48/163 of 21 December 1993 and 49/214 of 23 December 1994 on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/28 of 3 March 1995, 1/

Recalling also that the goal of the Decade is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health, and that the theme of the Decade is "Indigenous people: partnership in action",

Recognizing the importance of consultation and cooperation with indigenous people in planning and implementing the programme of activities for the Decade, the need for adequate financial support from the international community, including support from within the United Nations and the specialized agencies, and the need for adequate coordination and communication channels,

Recalling its invitation to organizations of indigenous people and other non-governmental organizations concerned to consider the contributions they can make to the success of the Decade, with a view to presenting them to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,

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1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3 and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

Taking note of Economic and Social Council decision 1992/255 of 20 July 1992, in which the Council requested United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to ensure that all technical assistance financed or provided by them was compatible with international instruments and standards applicable to indigenous people, and encouraged efforts to promote coordination in this field and greater participation of indigenous people in the planning and implementation of projects affecting them,

Mindful of the relevant recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit on Social Development, and of the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, 2/

Recognizing the value and diversity of the cultures and forms of social organization of indigenous people, and convinced that the development of indigenous people within their countries will contribute to the socio-economic, cultural and environmental advancement of all the countries of the world,

1. Takes note of the final report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive programme of action for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and the annexes to that report; 3/

2. Decides to adopt the programme of activities for the Decade contained in the annex to the present resolution;

3. Also decides that the programme of activities for the Decade may be reviewed and updated throughout the Decade and that at the mid-point of the Decade the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should review the results of the activities to identify obstacles to the achievement of the goals of the Decade and to recommend solutions for overcoming those obstacles;

4. Affirms as a major objective of the Decade the adoption by the General Assembly of a declaration on the rights of indigenous people;

5. Welcomes the establishment of an open-ended inter-sessional Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights with the sole purpose of elaborating a draft declaration, considering the draft contained in the annex to resolution 1994/45 of 26 August 1994 of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, entitled "Draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples", 4/ for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly within the Decade;

6. Also welcomes the decisions of the Economic and Social Council to approve the participation of some organizations of indigenous people in the Working Group, and encourages the continuing cooperation of the Council,

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2/ Resolution 50/6.

3/ A/50/511.

4/ See E/CN.4/1995/2-E/CN.4/Sub.2/1994/56, chap. II, sect. A.

the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat in processing further applications as a matter of priority in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights and the Council;

7. Recognizes among the important objectives of the Decade the consideration of the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations, as recommended in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, held from 14 to 25 June 1993, 5/ and welcomes the report of the workshop on the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people held at Copenhagen from 26 to 28 June 1995 6/ and the ongoing dialogue on this subject;

8. Recommends that the Secretary-General, drawing on the expertise of the Commission on Human Rights as well as the Commission for Sustainable Development and other relevant bodies, undertake a review, in close consultation with Governments and taking into account the views of indigenous people and of the existing mechanisms, procedures and programmes within the United Nations concerning indigenous people, and report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session;

9. Also recommends that the Commission on Human Rights, drawing on the results of the review and the Copenhagen workshop, consider the convening of a second workshop on the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people with the participation of independent experts as well as representatives of Governments, organizations of indigenous people and other non-governmental organizations concerned and United Nations bodies and specialized agencies;

10. Recognizes the importance of strengthening the human and institutional capacity of indigenous people to develop their own solutions to their problems, and, for these purposes, recommends that the United Nations University consider the possibility of sponsoring, in each region, one or more institutions of higher education as centres of excellence and the diffusion of expertise, and invites the Commission on Human Rights to recommend appropriate means of implementation;

11. Recommends that special attention be given to improving the extent and effectiveness of the participation of indigenous people in planning and implementing the activities for the Decade, including through the recruitment, where appropriate, by relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, of staff from among indigenous nationals of Member States, consistent with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations and within existing resources and staff levels;

12. Recommends that the Secretary-General:

(a) Request United Nations representatives in countries where there are indigenous people to promote, through the appropriate channels, greater participation of indigenous people in the planning and implementation of projects affecting them;

5/ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

6/ E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1995/7 and Add.1-3.

(b) Ensure coordinated follow-up to the recommendations concerning indigenous people of relevant world conferences, namely the World Conference on Human Rights, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development;

(c) Urge relevant United Nations conferences to promote and facilitate, to the extent possible and as appropriate, the effective input of the views of indigenous people;

(d) Ensure that information about the programme of activities for the Decade and opportunities for indigenous people to participate in those activities is disseminated in all countries and to the greatest possible extent in indigenous languages, to be financed from within existing budgetary resources;

(e) Report on progress made at the national, regional and international levels in accomplishing these objectives to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session;

13. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote the objectives of the Decade, taking into account the special concerns of indigenous people, in the fulfilment of his functions;

14. Requests the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Decade, bearing in mind the contribution that indigenous people have the capacity to make, to establish, within existing resources, a unit within the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, including indigenous persons, to support its activities related to indigenous people, in particular to plan, coordinate and implement activities for the Decade;

15. Invites the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights to consider the appointment of a fund-raiser who could develop new sources of funding for the Decade;

16. Requests the Administrative Committee on Coordination, through its inter-agency process, to consult and coordinate on the Decade, with a view to assisting the Coordinator of the Decade to fulfil his function, and to report on activities of the United Nations system in relation to the Decade to the General Assembly in each year of the Decade;

17. Invites the United Nations financial and development institutions, operational programmes and specialized agencies, in accordance with the existing procedures of their governing bodies:

(a) To give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people, with particular emphasis on the needs of those people in developing countries, including by the preparation of specific programmes of action for the implementation of the goals of the Decade, within their areas of competence;

(b) To launch special projects, through appropriate channels and in collaboration with indigenous people, for strengthening their community-level initiatives and to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise among indigenous people and other relevant experts;

(c) To designate focal points for coordination with the Centre for Human Rights of activities related to the Decade;

18. Emphasizes the important role of international cooperation in promoting the goals and activities of the Decade and the rights, well-being and sustainable development of indigenous people;

19. Also emphasizes the importance of action at the national level to the implementation of the goals and activities of the Decade;

20. Encourages Governments to support the Decade by:

(a) Contributing to the United Nations Trust Fund for the Decade;

(b) Preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade, in consultation with indigenous people;

(c) Seeking means, in consultation with indigenous people, of giving indigenous people greater responsibility for their own affairs and an effective voice in decisions on matters which affect them;

(d) Establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Decade are planned and implemented on the basis of full partnership with indigenous people;

21. Also encourages Governments to consider contributing, as appropriate, to the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, in support of the achievement of the goals of the Decade;

22. Appeals to Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to support the Decade by identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade, in cooperation with indigenous people;

23. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-first session the item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

97th plenary meeting
21 December 1995

ANNEX

Programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

A. Objectives

1. Taking into account General Assembly resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993, the main objective of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People is the strengthening of international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, health, culture and education.

2. The specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other international and national agencies, as well as communities and private enterprises, should devote special attention to development activities of benefit to indigenous communities.

3. A major objective of the Decade is the education of indigenous and non-indigenous societies concerning the situation, cultures, languages, rights and aspirations of indigenous people. In particular, efforts should be made to cooperate with the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education.

4. An objective of the Decade is the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous people and their empowerment to make choices which enable them to retain their cultural identity while participating in political, economic and social life, with full respect for their cultural values, languages, traditions and forms of social organization.

5. An objective of the Decade is to further the implementation of the recommendations pertaining to indigenous people of all high-level international conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, in particular its recommendation that consideration be given to the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system, the United Nations Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development as well as all future high-level meetings.

6. An objective of the Decade is the adoption of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples 4/ and the further development of international standards as well as national legislation for the protection and promotion of the human rights of indigenous people, including effective means of monitoring and guaranteeing those rights.

7. The objectives of the Decade should be assessed by quantifiable outcomes that will improve the lives of indigenous people and that can be evaluated halfway through the Decade and at its end.

B. Activities to be undertaken by the major actors

1. United Nations observances

8. A formal observance each year on the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, in New York, Geneva and at other offices of the United Nations.

9. Official observance of the Decade as part of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and other international conferences related to the aims and themes of the Decade.

10. Issuance of a special series of stamps by the United Nations Postal Administration highlighting the goals and themes of the Decade.

2. Activities of the Coordinator and the Centre for Human Rights

11. Establish, as a matter of urgency, an adequately staffed and resourced indigenous people's unit.

12. Request Governments to second qualified indigenous people, in consultation with interested national indigenous organizations, to assist in the administration of the Decade.

13. Create a fellowship programme, in collaboration with the Advisory Services of the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat and Governments, to assist indigenous people wishing to gain experience in the different branches of the Centre and in other parts of the United Nations system. Such

fellowships might be available for indigenous research and other similar activities.

14. Open a roster of indigenous experts in various fields who might be available to assist United Nations agencies, in collaboration with Governments, as appropriate, as partners or consultants.

15. Create an advisory group of persons with relevant knowledge of indigenous issues, acting in their personal capacity, to advise the Coordinator for the Decade and United Nations organizations, at their request. The members of this advisory group could include eminent indigenous persons, governmental representatives, independent experts and officials of the specialized agencies.

16. Consider the need to hold coordination meetings of Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and indigenous and non-governmental organizations, as necessary, to consider, examine and evaluate Decade activities and to develop an integrated, action-oriented strategy to advance the interests of indigenous people. The Economic and Social Council should hold mid-term and end-term reviews of the Decade in accordance with its resolution 1988/63 of 27 July 1988. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities should review international activities undertaken during the Decade and receive information from Governments on the implementation of the goals of the Decade in their respective countries.

17. Compile, on the basis of communications of the focal points in the United Nations system, a regular news-sheet containing information about meetings of interest, major or innovatory projects, new sources of funding, policy developments and other news to be widely distributed.

18. Encourage the development of partnership projects in association with Governments to address specific regional or thematic issues bringing together Governments, indigenous people and appropriate United Nations agencies.

19. Establish an information programme linking the Coordinator of the Decade to focal points of the United Nations system, national committees for the Decade and, through appropriate channels, indigenous networks; also develop a database of indigenous organizations and other relevant information, in cooperation with indigenous people, Governments, academic institutions and other relevant bodies.

20. Organize meetings on relevant themes of concern to indigenous people with indigenous participation.

21. Launch a series of publications on indigenous issues to inform policy makers, opinion-formers, students and other interested people.

22. Develop, in collaboration with Governments, training programmes on human rights for indigenous people, including the preparation of relevant training materials, when possible in indigenous languages.

23. Establish a board of trustees or advisory group, including indigenous people, to assist the Coordinator of the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade.

24. Encourage the development of projects and programmes, in collaboration with Governments and taking into account the views of indigenous people and the appropriate United Nations agencies, for support by the Voluntary Fund for the Decade.

25. Ensure, in coordination with Governments and indigenous organizations, the necessary measures to guarantee financing of the objectives of the Decade.

3. United Nations public information activities

26. Produce and disseminate a series of posters on the Decade using designs by indigenous artists.

27. Organize a lecture series at United Nations information centres and campuses linked to the United Nations University, using indigenous speakers.

28. Publish in indigenous languages the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights conventions and, upon its adoption, the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous people, considering the use of audiovisual material for this purpose. Consider also the involvement of indigenous experts and their own information networks in disseminating information about the Decade.

29. Prepare, in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights, information about indigenous people for distribution to the general public.

4. Operational activities of the United Nations system

30. Establish focal points for indigenous issues in all appropriate organizations of the United Nations system.

31. Encourage the governing bodies of specialized agencies of the United Nations system to adopt programmes of action for the Decade in their own fields of competence, in close cooperation with indigenous people.

32. Urge Governments to ensure that the programmes and budgets of relevant intergovernmental organizations give priority and devote sufficient resources to furthering the aims of the Decade, and request that regular reports on the action taken be submitted to the governing body or executive council of each organization.

33. Prepare, publish and disseminate a manual containing practical information for indigenous people on the operations and procedures of United Nations agencies.

34. Develop research on the socio-economic conditions of indigenous people, in collaboration with indigenous organizations and other appropriate partners, with a view to publishing regular reports in order to contribute to the solution of problems faced by indigenous people, taking into account paragraph 6.26 of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994. 7/

35. Encourage Governments to establish appropriate mechanisms and practices to ensure the participation of indigenous people in the design and implementation of national and regional programmes of concern to them.

7/ See Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994, (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

36. Hold regular inter-agency consultations, in collaboration with Governments and indigenous people, to exchange views and develop strategies on the programme of action for the Decade.

37. Hold consultations with Governments to examine, with national committees and development agencies, possibilities of cooperation in the activities of the Decade.

38. Develop training materials for indigenous people on human rights, including the translation of the main international instruments into different indigenous languages, and give them wide distribution. Consider the possibility of using radio programmes to gain access to indigenous communities not having written languages.

39. Prepare a database on national legislation on matters of particular relevance to indigenous people.

40. Hold consultations of all interested parties on the themes of human rights, the environment, development, health, culture and education, with a view to elaborating programmes in these areas.

5. Activities of regional organizations

41. Implement existing and develop new regional programmes of action to promote and support the objectives of the Decade.

42. Hold regional meetings on indigenous issues with existing regional organizations with a view to strengthening coordination, taking advantage of the machinery of the United Nations system and promoting the direct and active participation of indigenous people of different regions in collaboration with Governments. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations could consider the possibility of holding its sessions in conjunction with these meetings.

43. Develop training courses and technical assistance programmes for indigenous people in areas such as project design and management, environment, health and education, and promote the exchange of skills and experiences of indigenous people from different regions.

44. Make funds available at the regional level to activities benefiting indigenous people.

45. Encourage regional organizations to draw up regional instruments for the promotion and protection of indigenous people in the framework of their own structures and promote existing regional instruments.

6. Activities of Member States

46. Establish national committees for the Decade or similar mechanisms, including indigenous people, all relevant departments and other interested parties duly convened by Governments, to mobilize public support for the various activities connected with the Decade.

47. Intensify coordination and communication at the national level between relevant ministries, agencies and regional and local authorities by establishing focal points or other mechanisms for coordination and dissemination of information.

48. Use part of the resources of existing programmes and of international assistance for activities of direct benefit to indigenous people and, where possible, provide additional funds for specific activities.

49. Develop, in collaboration with indigenous communities, national plans for the Decade, including main objectives and targets, fixing quantitative outcomes and taking into account the need for resources and possible sources of financing.

50. Provide appropriate resources for indigenous institutions, organizations and communities to develop their own plans and actions according to their own priorities.

51. Adopt measures, in cooperation with indigenous people, to increase knowledge, starting at the elementary-school level and in accordance with the age and development of schoolchildren, concerning the history, traditions, culture and rights of indigenous people, with special emphasis on the education of teachers at all levels, and adopt measures to restore indigenous place names.

52. Consider ratification and implementation of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of the International Labour Organization (No. 169) and other international and regional instruments, in close consultation with the indigenous organizations of each country.

53. Recognize the existence, identity and rights of indigenous people through constitutional reforms or the adoption of new laws, when appropriate, to improve their legal status and guarantee their economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights.

54. Implement chapter 26 of Agenda 21, 8/ adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and the relevant provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 9/ the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, 5/ the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development 7/ and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, 10/ as well as the relevant provisions of future high-level conferences.

7. Activities of organizations of indigenous people

55. Establish an information network which can be linked to the Coordinator of the Decade and facilitate communications between the United Nations system, relevant governmental departments and indigenous communities.

8/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I and Vol. I/Corr.1, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales N°. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

9/ See United Nations Environment Programme, Convention on Biological Diversity (Environmental Law and Institutions Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

10/ A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

56. Indigenous organizations and international indigenous networks should develop information for local communities concerning the goals of the Decade and the activities of the United Nations.

57. Establish and support indigenous schools and university-level institutions and collaborate with the relevant United Nations agencies; participate in the revision of school texts and the contents of programmes of study in order to eliminate discriminatory content and promote the development of indigenous cultures and, where appropriate, in indigenous languages and scripts; develop indigenous curricula for schools and research institutions.

58. Create documentation centres, archives and in situ museums concerning indigenous people, their cultures, laws, beliefs and values, with material that could be used to inform and educate non-indigenous people on these matters. Indigenous people should participate on a preferential basis in the administration of these centres.

59. Establish and promote networks of indigenous journalists and launch indigenous periodicals at the regional and international levels.

60. Indigenous people may transmit their views on the programmes concerning their priority rights to Governments, the United Nations and the specialized agencies and regional organizations.

8. Activities of non-governmental organizations and other interested parties, including education establishments, the media and business

61. Cooperate with indigenous organizations, communities and people in the planning of activities for the Decade.

62. Non-governmental organizations working with indigenous people should involve indigenous people in their activities.

63. Create radio and television centres in indigenous regions, when appropriate and in accordance with national legislation, to provide information on the problems and proposals of indigenous people and to improve communications between indigenous communities.

64. Promote indigenous cultures, with due respect for intellectual property rights, through the publication of books, the production of compact discs and the organization of various artistic and cultural events which enhance knowledge of and serve to develop indigenous cultures and establish indigenous cultural and documentation centres.

65. Involve different social and cultural groups in the activities planned for the Decade.